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be found full of practical information and useful suggestions. Mr. Denison is an authority on the subject, we believe, having had a good deal of experience in it, and studied it both scientifically and mechanically. If, however, we are right in our impression that he had charge of the casting and swinging of "Big Ben," the immense bell made for the Victoria tower of the new Houses of Parliament, he has for once been unfortunate, "Ben" having cracked shortly after being hoisted to its place—from what cause we are not aware.

THE GOLDEN SUNSET.

THE following verses were written as words to a bit of colormusic; one of an interesting series of water-color sketches, by Mr. Charles Parsons, of this city, which we are glad to meet again in the present exhibition of the Academy. It was a happy thought of the artist, in crossing the ferry to his home, on the evening of December, a year ago, to note upon his tablet the sunsets which he saw, and afterwards to re-produce them. These recollections, fixing this the most evanescent of natural glories, will reveal something of the infinite variety of Nature to minds who, perhaps, have thought that a sunset was a sunset. It is one of the high ends of the artist to teach men to see what is before their eyes; and perhaps, after seeing here what of beauty the evenings of a single month have to show them, more than one resident across the river may think of the daily passage as less an annoyance than a privilege, and count the ferriage cheap whose ticket admits him to such a perpetual gallery as the sketches illustrate.

The golden sea its mirror spreads
Beneath the golden skies,
And but a narrow strip between
Of land and shadow lies.

The cloud-like rocks, the rock-like clouds,
Dissolved in glory float,
And, midway of the radiant flood,
Hangs silently the boat.

The sea is but another sky,
The sky a sea as well,
And which is earth, and which the heavens
The eye can scarcely tell.

So when for us life's evening hour Soft-fading shall descend, May glory, born of earth and heaven, The earth and heavens blend;

Flooded with peace the spirit float,
With silent rapture glow,
Till where earth ends and heaven begins
The soul shall scarcely know.

Samuel Longfellow.

By Grace I mean that artless balance of action and repose, springing from character, founded on propriety, which neither falls short of the demands nor overleaps the modesty of nature. Applied to execution, it means that dexterous power which hides the means by which its effect was obtained, the difficulties it has conquered.—Fuseli.

NATIONAL HERALDIC ART.

To the Editor of the Orayon:

AWAITING the action of the Commission on National Art. which it is to be supposed Congress will organize immediately, allow me to suggest through your columns a design for a noble work, to be laid before the Commission for its consideration. I am strongly in favor of Art being restricted to subjects of the day. I desire, as one citizen of this land, born by accident at this time, to transmit to posterity some striking evidence through Art, that the leading ideas of the country and of the age are recognized before posterity has a chance to take us to task for insensibility. I wish to follow the example of Great Britain, and show by heraldic emblazonments, a disposition to symbolize the original elements of our empire. You are doubtless aware that, in ancient times, the bards of Ireland and Wales were the most dreaded enemies England had to contend with: the bards stimulated the Irish and Welsh branches of the Celtic family to resist and to rebel, exciting their sensitive countrymen to arms by spirited appeals to abstract sentiments, and by drawing brilliant pictures of post-mortem honors; consequently, when a sufficient number of these bards had been caught, then hung, drawn and quartered, to intimidate the rest, the English annexed Ireland and Wales to their own land, and gratefully quartered the harp on the national shield of Great Britain, in token of respect for music and poetry, as well as to display a trophy of success and victory. I mention this one example of-English custom to illustrate the principle upon which I base my suggestion of a noble artistic work. Without further preamble, therefore, I proceed at once to make you acquainted with my design.

I propose to the Commission to have painted, on some conspicuous place upon the Capitol-building at Washington, a hational heraldic design, in other words, a coat of arms, typical of the cherished ideas of this particular age, which design I hope to have supplant, in popular estimation, the old and superannuated one of a striped shield and its motto of unity. I have not yet studied out all the ideas necessary to complete the design, but I have got a clear conception of two or three very important ones,

You are aware that coats-of-arms have figures on either side of a shield, termed supporters; they are first among the concomitants of heraldic insignia. I may say at once, that in my design, the supporters are intended to symbolize the Press-the great bulwark of freedom, and an institution of this age which I consider to be synonymous with that of the bards of old times. Everybody knows that the Press is powerful through eloquence, and that it is ever steadily gaining in influence. Editors have been nominated ministers extraordinary to foreign countries, as artists formerly were, and have actually "left their country for their country's good." The Press makes presidents,* senators (indirectly), more directly representatives, and latterly judges, and being such a comprehensive, active, and effective power, it may be said to be literally the supporter of the government. I have adopted two human figures, standing erect, to typify the Press. It may strike your readers curiously that I should adopt two supporters under one title of the Press; it may be asserted that I do not husband the material of my design by using two figures for an artistic idea when one would

[•] The word President seems to show an affinity for the word Press. Some future "Trench on words" may prove the latter to be a derivative from the former when distance shall have merged the origin of the two institutions of the Press and President into a vague and misty subject for archeological speculation.

do. I will explain why I use two. Before advancing my chief reason for doing so, however, I wish to state that the Press, if singular in one sense, is still plural; there are innumerable presses, consequently two supporters are indispensable, in order to typify quantity, if not strength.* But this reason is of minor importance by the side of my chief argument. We have a North and a South, Mr. Editor, which you, as the conductor of an Art-journal, may not be aware of; it is a fact, nevertheless; the country has found it out in the same way as dyspeptics discover that they possess a stomach and a liver-by frequent disturbances in those regions, causing to a weak mind a great depression of spirits.† Both North and South have this Press -a Press of diverse aspects-so different, that one supporter could not adequately represent them both. It is unnecessary for me to illustrate this assertion; it is a recognized fact among the thinking people of this country. Besides, in case I should attempt to personify the Press by one supporter only, and portray its companion as typical of some other "peculiar institution," I should be at a loss to designate an equal power to stand beside it. The Press, therefore, must be represented by two figures, one on either side of the shield. I thought at first of having the right and left arms, respectively, of the supporters interlocked over the shield, to express union; but I found this would not do. As a substitute for the expression of union, a slight eff rt of the imagination may suppose the two symbolic figures united by an invisible c(h)ord, reaching

" from heart to heart,

As if the Stamese Twins appeared stretched far apart."

Another suggestion occurred to me that this c(h)ord might be made visible and turned to account, by placing upon it Powers's female figure of America, but not wishing to incur the risk of being condemned by critics for plag arism, I thought no more of that.

I have, I think, settled the matter so far as regards the import of two figures to my heraldic design; I wish now to suggest the proper costume. Everybody knows that the Press is partycolored, sometimes black, sometimes white, and, figuratively speaking, always made up of highly-colored intellectual patchwork. It struck me, therefore, that a harlequin costume was the most appropriate. I accepted this costume as soon as the

- * For the benefit of your readers who may be puzzled by the technical term "supporters," I quote from Webster's Dictionary definitions the of that term:
- 1. One that supports or maintains.
- 2. That which supports or upholds; a prop, a pillar, etc.
- 3. A sustainer, a comforter.
- 4. A maintainer, a defender.
- 5. One who maintains or helps to carry on, as the supporters of a war.
- 6. An advocate; a defender; a vindicator; as the supporters of religion, morality, justice, etc.
- 7. An adherent; one who takes part; as the supporter of a party or faction.
- 8. In ship-building, a knee placed under the cat-head.
- 9. Supporters, in Heraldry, are figures of beasts that appear to support the arms

How beautifully adapted to the Press are the various ideas embraced in the definitions of the term supporters! No. 9 is the weakest, if taken in its middle age meaning, but the strongest, when viewed in a different sense, according to my modification of the idea. You observe that the supporters of my coat-of-arms are human, while the mediæval supporters were animals. Now, as every indication of the various ideas radiating from a symbol fortifies that symbol, I would state that my supporters illustrate the idea of progression, according to the theory of the "Vestiges of Creation"—a theory wholly belonging to this age. The discarding of the beasts, and substitution of human forms upon my heraldic design indicates in a material point of view, the advancement of the species since Great Britain adopted beasts as symbols. May not the humanized character of the modern appellation of John Bull be accounted for by this theory?

† I am not sure that this figure of speech is original with me. As Raphael however, borrowed figures from Massaccio, I beg leave from the unknown author to use this one in its present application.

idea came into my head, solely on account of fine color, which besides being the chief quality of Art that attracts admiration now-a-days, is so essential for heraldic effect, and of so much consequence in symbolism. A harlequin costume paints well; the colors are pigmentary, and at the same time prismatic; each color is positive, notwithstanding that the combined effect of all is generally bewildering. Another reason bearing upon color led me to adopt this costume. There is no doubt but that my heraldic design will ultimately be cut in marble, and as there is a growing appreciation of everything Greek, it will afford native sculptors a fine opportunity to follow the example of the Greek masters by coloring their "marbles." One particular of the costume I have not alluded to, and that belongs to the head. A harlequin wears a mask; (this is a feature of costume which may well replace the symbolic helmet of the middle ages). Now, Mr. Editor, is not that mask an appropriate and characteristic symbol of the Press? Can anybody detect the editorial we behind the mask of printer's ink? Is not Justice, according to the heathen, always blinded? and why, in the natural progress of ideas, should not Justice be allowed to see? Does not the Press represent public opinion, the ultima thule of justice? Why, then, should not the bandage of the old heathen figure of Justice be displayed upon a figure of modern conception, with the simple modification of extending the folds of the bandage down over the face, and piercing holes through it for the eyes?* Mr. Editor, I am proud of that idea, and I insist upon having credit for it. To tell the truth, I set great store upon this branch of my heraldic design. The mask is not the only peculiarity of the harlequin; he always carries a sword. Without dwelling upon the pertinency of the editorial sword, I merely state that I would represent that implement by a highly polished imitation steel blade. I say imitation, because I mean to have the imitation visible-which point of detail brings me to the last of the two features of my heraldic design.

Between the two supporters of a coat-of-arms, you know, there is a shield; this shield I propose to have represent a large magnifying mirror. The ideal fervor of the present day is never visible in the real, consequently I intend the sword to be of wood, gilded (if I may use the term) with steel filings on one side, and to be so held by the South supporter as to project a considerable portion of it in front of the mirror, which will reveal the side not gilded on a much larger scale, show the real mater al, and thereby remove any unpleasant sensation that might be caused by the glittering of the sword when the sun shines on it. Most people may think there is no significance in this idea. but I think there is a great deal. Before I pass on to the significancy of the mirror, I wish to add that in one particular of the supporters' insignia, I have no authority for what I shall introduce, and I crave indulgence from the critics. These supporters being intended to represent the Press of the North and

^{*} There is great significance in this modification of the heathen conception of Justice. Such an improved symbol of justice would typify other ideas characteristic of our age. The great problem of our time is apparent in whatever concerns the demonstration of the triumph of spirit over matter. It seems to me that, as the eye is so reliable in its visual power-so clairvoyant, so penetrating, and so positive of its being able to see into the "middle of next week"—it should certainly be admitted to have had power enough in the lapse of ages, to have worn a spiritual hole through a piece of material rag. The idea, therefore, should be symbolized. Besides, Justice having been so long blind, I think modern gratitude could not be more conspicuously exhibited than by allowing Justice, symbolically, to look about and see what has been going on in her name. Granting Justice this privilege, would also typify the triumph of the ideal over the real. I have used the term " middle of next week " above, because I have never heard of any spiritual manifestations that were reliable or of use to anybody that related to a more

the South, it is but proper that they should be distinguished one from the other. I propose to effect this by hanging around the necks of each a design after the fashion of a draught-board, extending downward, and covering the breast I ke a herald's tabard. The North shall wear, in black and white, sundry checks equal to the number of free States, and the South red and white checks equal to the number of slave States. The latter being red may typify the bloody disposition of the South, and the former I will contrive so that at a distance no one can exactly tell what the checks stand for; they will be so interfused that no one but a politician can distinguish the lines of demarcation.

I now come to the mirror, the last idea, and not the least of my design. I intend this mirror specially for the artistic display of the painter's genius. You are aware that I have called the shield a magnifying mirror. I propose to have the multiplying capacity of the mirror apparent, first by the enlarged appearance of the sword of the South reflected therein, and secondly by the representation of a mountain. This mountain is the most cunning part of the whole design. A mountain by itself is nothing; it has no meaning as a mere prominent object in nature. In order, however, to render my mountain significant, and at the same time afford an opportunity for the display of two departments of artistic genius, I shall avail myself of the popular love for allegory.* I intend to get a landscape painter to do the mountain, under the direction of one of our best animal painters. The employment of two artists in this way, while it secures a combination of art-genius, indicates at the same time the present aspect of the national love for Art, landscape and animal being the two branches of Art most cultivated. The mountain shall be painted with Pre-Raphaelite accuracy, without regard to atmospheric modifications, and under the direction of the animal painter. I propose that the mountain shall exhibit in its contour, in order to make it mean something, the shape of a mouse! I could not imagine to myself any allegorical representation of a national object that would typify, in heraldic harmony, both the lofty and the grand, under the term ideal, and at the same time demonstrate the real, objectively, in the magnifying power of the mirror. Now, Mr. Editor, I think my thought an ingenious one, and perfectly original. Like all great thoughts, too, it is a foundation for other thoughts; for ins ance, this age being conspicuous for the introduction of the camel upon our soil, a very slight alteration of the outline of the mountain might be made so as to represent a hump, and when the coat-of-arms, completed, shall be submitted to the public for approval, if a critic could be procured, born in the vicinity of the Green Mountains, it would be an easy thing for him to swear that the mountain was a study from nature, and thereby quash whatever opposition to its form there might be.†

I have but little more to add in relation to my design. I have only thought over two of the ideas forming a part of it. There are certain accessories belonging to a national coat-of-arms which ingenious minds may suggest as pertinent. I leave the task to them. In the words of the patent-law, I claim as original, first, the idea of Art embalming the Press, in grateful return for its having so often performed that affectionate service for Art; and secondly, the idea of the improved supporters, and of the mountain and the modification of the ancient

Greek idea of Justice's blinder, into the modern idea of the harlequin mask. I ask no compensation of my country for the design; if I should copyright it, I fear (between ourselves) it would cost too much to defend my rights. I will be generous, therefore. In conclusion, I respectfully submit the design to the Congressional Commission, and earnestly urge upon them the greatest discrimination in the selection of competent artists to put it in form.

Your ob't serv't, Umbra Nominis.

Architecture.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

Meeting of Feb. 16th.—The Librarian reported the receipt of several volumes from the Commissioner on Indian Affairs, at Washington.

An interesting debate took place on the Origin of the Arch, and the various transformations of the Style which its introduction led to.

Meeting of March 2d.—The Librarian reported the receipt of numerous valuable works from the Smithsonian Institute, by Messrs. Detlif Lienau, Charles Babcock, and L. Eidlitz.

A Library Committee was appointed to take charge of all donations, and to solicit further contributions from such parties as they might deem it advisable to apply to.

A Committee on Papers was appointed to procure papers to be read before the Institute, to report on the discussion of said papers, and to attend to their publication.

Meeting of March 16th.—The Board of Trustees reported that more commodious rooms had been secured for the Institute in the University Building.

The Librarian reported the reception of some fine specimeus of ancient Carved Oak, presented by Mr. John Rogers; also a work on Pompeii, together with a portfolio containing a collection of photographic views in Venice, presented by himself.

The following paper was then read by Mr. Leopold Eidlitz.

ON STYLE.

Webster's definition of the term Style as pertaining to the Fine Arts, is the "characteristic and peculiar mode of execution." Taking this simple definition as a basis of my investigation, I propose to discard all conventionally received dogmas, and draw my conclusions from facts as they exist, and if in so doing I should happen to develop what might be considered a professional heresy, it will certainly tend to correct an injurious prejudice, or, what is more probable, to excite such discussion as will effectually refute any errors; and consequently establish the truth.

I will here repeat the definition of Architecture, given on a former occasion, viz.: Architecture, in the abstract, is the Aex of representing and expressing in the organism of a structure the *idea* which has given rise to its erection. An indispensable accessory to architecture as an art, and to the architect in his professional capacity, is the science of construction, or the knowledge of the nature and combination of materials.

Style in architectural art would, therefore, imply the characteristic and peculiar mode of representing and expressing in the organism of a structure, the idea which has given rise to its erection, assisted at all times by a certain degree of progress in the science of construction. Styles are accordingly dependent;

^{*} The popular love for allegory is apparent in the inability of the public to see or enjoy merit in a work of Art unless it tells some story. People always desire to see something going on. I think this disposition of the public accounts for the greater admiration of the Horse Fair than for Mr. Aepinwall's Murillo.

[†] A mountain of this range is called the Camel's Hump.